

## **AB 1565**

### **The Child Care Quality Study Act**

**Authored by Assemblymembers Pavley and Benoit**

*Coauthors: Assemblymembers Dymally, Koretz, Bermudez, and Shirley Horton, and Senator Kuehl*

#### **IN BRIEF**

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AB 1565 would direct the California Department of Education to use \$1.845 million of one-time federal child care quality funding to conduct a study of a quality rating system for licensed child day care centers and family day care homes in California. The proposed study would employ a stakeholder-based process to develop a proposal for rating child care quality, and would provide recommendations to the Legislature no later than one year after the contract for the study is executed.

#### **PROBLEM**

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Recent estimates indicate that more than half of California's children under the age of five spend as many as 8-12 hours per day in non-parental care while their parents are at work. With so many of California's young children spending most of their waking hours in child care homes and facilities, we should be especially concerned about the quality of care our children are receiving. But to date, the state has only established bare minimum health and safety standards for licensed child care facilities, and these standards in no way ensure that children receive the stimulation, interaction, and nurturing that they need to support their cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Because California has no standards for, or definition of, quality child care, the current child care health and safety requirements often substitute for quality standards in the marketplace. Providers and parents alike often use a facility's compliance with California's health and safety standards to assess and speak for the quality of a facility's care. Otherwise, parents, who struggle with busy schedules and limited resources, have few tools and little guidance, aside from their own intuition and word-of-mouth, to determine if a facility meets their child's needs.

Child care quality rating systems have proven to be an effective consumer tool for assessing child care quality and for improving the actual quality of care in facilities. At least 38 states have implemented some type of quality rating system for child care facilities,

and many of these states report that they have increased their statewide child care quality as a result of instituting a rating system.

#### **EXISTING LAW**

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Current law does not define quality child care nor does it set quality standards for child care facilities. Current law only establishes basic health and safety standards for licensed child care facilities.

#### **THIS BILL**

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AB 1565 would require that the Department of Education conduct a stakeholder based study to develop a quality rating proposal for all licensed child care facilities in California. The bill provides funding to the Department of Education to pay for the staffing of this effort, and provides \$1.5 million to fund the convening of a stakeholder-based advisory group, and a contractor's work to research and study various issues related to child care quality, including:

- Development of a definition of quality child care,
- Determination of the best indicators of quality child care,
- Determination of the best method to measure quality child care,
- Assessment of the implications for child care quality associated with the development of a child care quality rating system for California,
- Evaluation of a field test of the measurements of quality indicators developed by this study,
- Incorporation of the findings of a 2005 Bureau of State Audit of Community Care Licensing into the recommendations of the study.

The study will culminate with a public hearing and a report to the Legislature regarding the advisory group's and the contractor's recommendations concerning the development of a child care quality rating system for California.

If implemented statewide, a rating system would provide parents a reliable tool to assess the quality of care their children are receiving. The rating system would also provide California a mechanism to adequately measure the quality of care currently provided to our children, to recognize those providers providing a high standard of care, and to take an active role in improving overall child care quality.

## **SUPPORT**

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County of Los Angeles  
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees  
California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC)  
Child Care Law Center  
Child Development Policy Institute

## **OPPOSITION**

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None on file.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Contact:  
Susan Little, Office of Assemblymember Pavley  
319-2346  
[susan.little@asm.ca.gov](mailto:susan.little@asm.ca.gov)

David Duran, Office of Assemblymember Benoit  
319-2064